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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that introductory interpersonal courses cannot facilitate competent interaction if they fail to take account of the limitations of human consciousness. The paper focuses on Gregory Bateson's communication and learning theory, and explores the problems of being overly conscious of interpersonal interaction. The paper proposes a structural approach to an introductory course that minimizes, but does not eliminate, problems of consciousness in relationships. The paper maintains that this approach encourages the student to habituate and make unconscious his or her knowledge of theory while consciously analyzing communication situations. The paper then outlines in detail the structure and materials necessary for such a course. One figure and 4 endnotes are included; 43 references are attached. (Author/PRA)

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THE ROLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTORY COURSE

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The Role of Consciousness in Interpersonal:
Communication: Pedagogical Implications
for the Introductory Course

This manuscript argues that introductory interpersonal courses cannot facilitate competent interaction if they fail to take account of the limitations of human consciousness. Focusing on Gregory Bateson's communication and learning theory, the problems of being overly conscious of interpersonal interaction are explored. A structural approach to the course is proposed the minimizes, but does not eliminate, problems of consciousness in relationships. This approach encourages the student to habituate and make unconscious their knowledge of theory while consciously analyzing communication situations. The structure and materials necessary for such a course are outlined in detail.

> A communicator can become extremely self-aware and obsessed with analyzing every detail of a communication encounter or relationship. Such a communicator can become obsessed to the point of distraction and incompetence. Take the example of the mate who insists on explaining *every* utterance of a relational partner. . .In such cases, the overly attentive/analytical individual spends too much time *analyzing* communication and not enough time doing it (and enjoying it) [emphasis in original].
>
> Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, p. 82

It is possible that many of the skills and theories taught in interpersonal communication courses, although designed to encourage competent interaction, can instead promote the kind of incompetence described in the above quotation. What type of interpersonal instruction could promote this counter-intuitive result? A prime suspect promoting communication incompetence, a specter lurking throughout all interpersonal instruction, is consciousness. Proficient interaction cannot be encouraged if interpersonal communication pedagogy fails to take account of the conventions of human consciousness. Thus, a thorough examination of the relationships between communication performance, and human consciousness is necessary in order to present instructional techniques that encourage proficient interaction. Focusing on Gregory Bateson's communication and learning theory, several issues are explored in this manuscript. First, the problems of being overly conscious of interpersonal interactions are detailed. Second, it is argued that <u>any</u> interpersonal communication instruction promotes consciousness. Third, a structural approach to the introductory interpersonal communication course is then proposed that minimizes, but does not eliminate, the problems of consciousness in relationships. The goal of such a course is to provide the student with a synthetic blend of conceptual and behavioral knowledge. Finally, pedagogical suggestions are made to facilitate the development of the synthetic course.

Gregory Bateson's perspective on communication and learning theory is justified for two reasons. First, Bateson's communication theory is featured in a number of interpersonal textbooks (e.g., Leeds-Hurwitz, 1989; Trenholm & Jensen, 1988; Smith & Williamson, 1985; Wilmot, 1980). Because Bateson's theories are employed in interpersonal instruction, it might prove valuable to instructors to explore Bateson's view of communication proficiency. Second, Bateson's theories of mental functioning have gone beyond recent neurological and social-cognitive research (research that has confirmed his initial premises) and attempted to show how the strengths and limitations of mental functioning can be expressed without destroying larger systems such as interpersonal relationships. Bateson's interest in communication, learning, and mental functioning provides a singularly unique perspective from which to examine interpersonal relationships and interpersonal communication instruction. Before exploring these connections it is necessary to review recent research on the conventions of human cognitive processes.

Review of Literature: Conscious & Unconscious Information Processing

Although much remains to be learned about the functioning of the human brain, research suggests two primary information processing resources: conscious and unconscious (Baars, 1983, 1985; Bateson, 1972d; Hample, 1986; Davidson, 1982). This section defines and models both modes of thought.

Conscious or controlled information processing is defined here as thought that is effortful and intentionally controlled (Bargh, 1989). According to Baars (1983, 1985), conscious thought resembles a central information exchange that allows specialized processors to communicate with one another and cooperate or compete to solve problems. Stable information that appears in the central information exchange is conscious information that is "distributed

to the specialized processors much as a television broadcast is distributed to a viewing audience" (Baars, 1983, p. 46). Unconscious or automatic processing is defined as thought that meets one or more of the following criteria: it is "*unintentional, involuntary, effortless* (i.e., not consumptive of limited processing capacity), *autonomous,* and occurring *outside of awareness*" [emphasis in original] (Bargh, 1989, p. 3). Unconscious thought resembles the operation of specialized processors that can autonomously regulate nervous activity (Baars, 1983, 1985).

Some of these processors are relatively fixed or "hard wired" into our brain (e.g., processors that control autonomic activity such as breathing and reflex) (Davidson, 1982), while other processors can, with the assistance of consciousness, be organized and reorganized as needed (e.g., processors that allow us to drive a car or ride a bicycle without focused attention) (Baars, 1983).

The combination of a central information exchange linking specialized processors is an ideal learning device (Baars, 1983). Specialized processors can automatically and simultaneously carry out a high variety of programmed tasks with little conscious attention. This structured processing solves recurrent problems (e. g., breathing, nonverbal behavior, speech production) without taxing limited conscious resources (Baars, 1983). However, in new situations--those that do not fit the structured operation of the specialized processors--more flexibility is necessary (Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell & Dardes, 1987). The new situation triggers complex, effortful, conscious information processing (Bargh, 1989; Spielman, Pratto & Bargh, 1988). To handle the new situation the central information exchange broadcasts messages that alter or reprogram the operation of the specialized processors (Davidson, 1982; Bargh & Tota, 1988; Pope & Singer, 1982; Pribram, 1982; Spielman et al.,

1988). This occurs, for example, when pregnant women are taught to consciously alter their breathing patterns during labor--normally an unconsciously regulated activity.

Once the new program is absorbed (i.e., it becomes redundant with specialized processor operation), conscious thought is unnecessary and the processors return to automatic, unconscious activity. The new mode of processing is said to be habituated and will continue until different information is presented by the central information exchange, or until environmental changes make processor operations difficult such that conscious activity is again triggered. Habituation can be exemplified in learning to ride a bicycle. When first learning to ride, considerable conscious effort is required to keep the vehicle upright, steer, and peddle. Continued practice means that redundant conscious information is broadcast to specialized processors that will begin to autonomously perform riding activities, thus eliminating the need for conscious thought. The combination of specialized processors with a central information exchange offers the advantage of structured processing during routine tasks and flexible reprogramming during non-routine tasks (Baars, 1983, 1985).

Having roughly sketched a model of information processing based on recent neurological and social-cognitive research, it is necessary to note that conscious and unconscious processes are not dichotomous but are a matter of degree and type (Bargh, 1989; Benoit & Benoit, 1986; Pope & Singer, 1982; Pribram, 1982; Toulmin, 1982). Two commonly distinguished levels of consciousness are relevant to interpersonal communication. A basic level of consciousness is what Toulmin (1982) refers to as attentiveness. Attentiveness implies a focused "concentration" or "monitoring" of some aspect of self or environment (p. 59). Attentive consciousness involves a screening

process whereby salient information is attended to and non-salient information is excluded (Pope & Singer, 1982). At a higher level than attentiveness is articulateness. Articulate consciousness involves not only attentiveness but the ability to articulate a "motive;" "plan," or "intention" (p. 60). Pribram (1982) refers to this as "self-consciousness" (p. 52). Articulate or self consciousness is closely linked to verbal reports of goals, plans, intentions, and purposes (Bateson, 1972a; 1972b 1972d).

As with consciousness, there are varying degrees and types of unconscious activity relevant to interpersonal communication. At the deepest level is preconscious automatic activity (Bargh, 1989). At this level, interpretive and analytic rules are used to structure incoming stimuli and produce the "givens" of consciousness. These processes "operate uncontrollably, autonomously, involuntarily, and nearly effortlessly" (Bargh, 1989, p. 11). Bateson (1927b) explains that, "the content of the screen of consciousness is systematically selected from the enormously great plethora of mental events. But of the rules and preferences of this selection, very little is known" (p. 444).(1) Thus, consciousness is constructed by automatically applied rules that are outside of conscious awareness.

At a higher level than preconscious activity is unintended goal-dependent automatic activity. This form of automatic activity describes the unconscious and unintended side-effects of conscious activity (Bargh, 1989, p. 20). An example of an automatic side effect is called implicit learning. Cognitive researchers have found that unintended encodings (e.g., pattern sequences) are automatically stored in memory as the result of some other intentional, focused information processing (e.g., memorizing strings of numbers or letters) (Bargh, 1989, p. 21). Bateson (1972c; 1972e) referred to this as deutero-learning and argued that it played a role in all learning contexts.

Finally, according to Bargh (1989), the highest level of unconsciousness is intended, goal-dependent automatic activity (p. 24). This brand of unconscious activity requires consciously intended initiation, but once activated, information processing proceeds automatically. Automatic processing will continue until the intended goal is achieved or a novel situation triggers conscious intervention. Because consciousness initiates and can intervene in this information processing, Bargh refers to them as semi-automatic processes. Two types of semi-automatic information processing include: situational scripts that guide the performance of skilled social behavior (Abelson, 1980) and procedural knowledge structures that become autonomous with frequent application and practice (Bargh, 1989, p. 25). The latter activity represents the concept of habituation described earlier.

From the above review it is apparent that although analytically separate, conscious and unconscious information processing are interactive and interdependent. Unconscious activity is necessary for tasks too rapid and numerous for conscious processing. Conscious processing is necessary for reprogramming unconscious activity thus insuring system flexibility. The questions this paper attempts to address are: What specific mental interdependancies are necessary for adequate information processing in social relationships? How can these interdependancies be encouraged through instruction?

Problems of Consciousness in Interpersonal Relations

There is little doubt that conscious methods of codification are favored by Western culture. Bateson (1972d) argues that, "In the cliche system of Anglo-Saxons, it is commonly assumed that it would be somehow better if what is unconscious were made conscious" (p. 136). Consciousness is not inherently dysfunctional. Conscious coding serves certain important functions that

include: allowing us to learn, formulate intentions, control actions, and increase self-monitoring behavior (Andersen, 1976, p. 96). However, evidence indicates that conscious modes of thought may be an inappropriate basis for action in interpersonal relationships. The disadvantages of relational consciousness include its limited speed and capacity, and its link to intention and purpose.

Consciousness is slow and limited in its information handling capacity when compared to unconscious/automatic process. Baars (1983) argues that the central information exchange is slow because it requires communication and cooperation between several specialized processors. Such interaction is demanding of resources and slower than specialized processors acting independently (Andersen, 1986 Baars, 1983). Because the specialized processors operate automatically and autonomously each can perform programmed activity at high rates of speed. Another limitation of conscious processing is its capacity. Our conscious mind processes information serially, and has limited capacity for competing contents (Baars, 1983, 1985; Hample, 1986; Pope & Singer, 1982). Research indicates that humans can make only one conscious decision every half second (Hample, 1986, p. 26), can only store seven (plus or minus two) isolated items in conscious memory, and can react to only one stream of speech at a time (Baars, 1983). The serial, unitary processing habits of conscious thought create severe capacity limitations and stand in contrast to the parallel processing ability of unconsciousness.

The limited speed and capacity of consciousness make it unsuitable as the primary mode of data processing in the information rich environment of interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal contexts include innumerable and complex codification problems including: (1) several levels of information potential within each message (Rawlins, 1987; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson,

1967), and; (2) many "mode identifying" cues that classify the meaningful contexts within which interpretations are assigned (Bateson, Jackson, Haley & Weakland, 1972g, p. 203). According to Baars (1983), we are unaware of the codification processes that allow us to interpret and ascribe meaning to these multi-leveled, contextualized messages (p. 55-56). Consciousness must be reserved for such "attention-demanding tasks as self-presentation, impression management, action planning, and action execution" (Bargh, 1989, p. 13). Thus, even simple conversation require enormous resources of speed and capacity; resources not available in consciousness (Andersen, 1986; Berger, 1980; Berger & Douglas, 1982).

Attempts to translate unconscious communication processes into conscious process (such as teaching students to "read" various nonverbal stimuli or "label" different contexts) would lead to enormous errors in translation. Such translation would not only be mentally uneconomical, but be potentially toxic to one's view of the relationship.

Bateson (1972d) writes that:

> consciousness is necessarily selected and partial, i.e., that the content of consciousness is, at best, a small part of truth about the self. But if this part be ***selected*** in any systematic manner, it is certain that the partial truths of consciousness will be, in aggregate, a distortion of the truth of some larger whole [emphasis in original] (p. 144).

Attempts to translate formerly unconscious process to conscious process will distort one's view of larger relational systems. The limits of consciousness make it an unsuitable means of information processing in multi-leveled, complex, simultaneously operating systems such as interpersonal relationships. To protect our conscious minds from overload, according to Hample (1986), we must "delegate the greater part of our behavioral and cognitive decisions to the unconscious and only retain conscious involvement in the highest-level considerations" (p. 26).

A second disadvantage of conscious decision-making in relationships involves intention and purpose. In the review of neuro-psychological evidence it was noted that the highest level of consciousness--articulate consciousness--is closely related to intention, purpose, and the articulation of plans and goals. However, many aspects of interpersonal relationships have little to do with purpose. For example, Malanowski's (1948) concept of phatic communication suggests that in many conversations, the informational content of the message is unimportant and largely ignored by participants; instead the very act of conversing functions to create ties of union and reaffirm sociability (p. 249). According to Malanowski, the meaning of phatic utterances cannot be connected with the purpose or intent of the conversants. Employing the concept of phatic communication in the context of recent communication theory, Leeds-Hurwitz (1989) argues that every message has both informative and phatic functions. The phatic functions include cues (often nonverbal) that present a social identity and define the nature of the relationship. The phatic cues are processed out of awareness and are free of the limitations and distortions of controlled thought (Bateson, 1972f, p. 412-413). Given that phatic activities are not produced or received consciously, conceiving of relationships as highly conscious (i.e., intentional, purposive, goal oriented) terms leaves one less able to comprehend and act in the important social aspects of interpersonal relationships.

Although consciousness is favored in many Western institutions, including the academy, it is not necessarily the best method of processing information relevant to interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, any method of instruction in interpersonal communication encourages conscious approaches to the subject.

Interpersonal Instruction and Consciousness

Pearce (1977) has distinguished between two traditional approaches to instruction in interpersonal communication: the humanistic celebration and the objective scientific approaches. In this section I argue that both methods of instruction in interpersonal communication subsidize conscious approaches to relationships and both approaches train students to translate unconscious process into conscious thought. In the next section a synthetic instructional approach is proposed that minimizes these problems.

According to Pearce (1977), the humanistic celebration teaches "a set of attitudes about persons and interpersonal relationships and a set of skills required for communicating in preferred ways" (p. 110). Such courses tend to be experiential and involve exchanging testimonies of experiences, discussions of meanings involved in communication situations, role playing to improve specific communication skills, or personal growth exercises that clarify perceptions or values. According to Pearce, students are encouraged to use their attitudes and skills to achieve relational objectives. For example, self-disclosure is encouraged to achieve more intimate relationships. The use of newly learned attitudes and skills to achieve relational goals demands conscious thought and controlled application. Unfortunately, this objective is short-circuited by the limited speed and capacity of consciousness and its link to intention and purrpose. First, a student's use of skills is constrained by the limited capacity of human consciousness. Bateson (1972a) argues that isolated skills are "a short-cut device to enable you to get quickly at what you want; not to act with maximum wisdom in order to live, but to follow the shortest logical or causal path to get what you next want" (p. 433). Because our conscious minds cannot grasp the multiple levels and varied outcomes of relational behavior, purposively based skills may achieve

immediate goals at the expense of the larger relationship. Secondly, skills that achieve immediate goals may not be applicable or easily employed during the large amount of relational activity (such as phatic communication) that is non-goal oriented.

According to Pearce (1977), objective scientific instruction teaches "a series of law-like propositions describing causal relations between stimuli and responses" (p. 109). Such courses are cognitive and involve reviewing, summarizing, and understanding written research. The objective scientific (theory) approach teaches students to understand behavior by "subsuming it as a particular instance of a general law and to control (other people's) behavior by manipulating causes" (p. 109). The manipulation of causes and control of behavior encourages students to consciously control situations and is problematic because of the limited capacity of consciousness described previously.

The problem of increasing students' consciousness toward their relationships occurs not only in humanistic celebration (skills & attitudes) and objective scientific (theoretic) pedagogy, but occurs in <u>any</u> alternative instructional method. The reason for this is the human habit of implicit or deutero-learning. In the literature review, deutero-learning is a level of automatic, unconscious activity. Deutero-learning was defined as the unintended, unconscious encodings of pattern that are stored while consciously attending to other aspects of a learning task. In experiments, for example, subjects attempting to memorize letter strings implicitly learned the repeated pattern sequences of those strings (Bargh, 1989, p. 21). In interpersonal relationships, deutero-learning involves the unconscious recognition and punctuation of interaction sequences into recognizable contexts (Bateson, 1972e). For example, greetings between romantic partners after extended

separation is an easily recognizable context of interaction. Likewise, the greetings exchanged between business associates after extended separation, although a different context, is easily recognizable. To behave properly in each context we must distinguish between them, although such distinctions are usually made unconsciously and are an unintended result of interaction (Rawlins, 1987). The husband who greets his wife's return in the same manner as a business associate's return has misidentified the context and enacted relationally inappropriate behavior. Learning II is an interactant's continual, unconscious ability to distinguish contexts despite minor variations in their performance. This is accomplished while conscious attention is focused on other conversational tasks.

Learning II, however, does not stop at simple context recognition. Analyzing Bateson's theory of human communication, Rawlins (1987) notes that, "recurrent confrontation with or improved ability in handling specific types of contexts leads the subject to develop expectations for their occurrence" (p. 67). Thus, once a person learns to recognize certain behavior sequences, future interactions will be codified as if conforming to previous habits of learning II. This will be done even if it requires disregarding cues that suggest different context distinctions (Rawlins, 1987, p. 67). If, for example, a person involved in a romantic relationship has been lied to several times in the past, he/she may soon come to expect deception from the new romantic partner whether the cues related to deception are displayed or not. Thus, the would-be lover has implicitly and unconsciously learned to punctuate romantic contexts as deceptive.

What does the concept of learning II or deutero-learning mean for the instruction of interpersonal communication? As we have seen, consciousness and unconsciousness are two different means of processing information.

Consciousness can become deutero-learned. That is, students can develop the habit of perceiving and enacting relationships consciously. How can this habit develop? Human learning takes place on multiple levels. People learn not only the content of a lesson, but deutero-learn the form, values, or context of the lesson (Bateson, 1972c). Bateson explained this subtle type of learning with the following example. Imagine that well meaning politicians and social scientists train children to spy on their parents to eradicate behavior deemed anti-social. Bateson (1972b) notes that, "because the children are people they will do more than learn this simple trick--they will build this experience into their whole philosophy of life; it will color all their future attitudes toward authority" (p. 164). Thus, children may learn the information relevant to spying in a particular context, but may also begin to view other contexts as those in which the values of the spy would be useful or necessary. Similarly, students may learn the content of a course in interpersonal communication (training in decisions about when to deploy self-disclosure), but they may also begin to view all interpersonal contexts as those in which ***decision-making*** and ***deployment*** are useful and necessary. Thus, students not only learn the content of the course, but deutero-learn the ***form***, ***values***, or ***context*** of the course.

What form, values, or context dominate education in Western universities? The form of university instruction sponsors conscious, purposive, analytic thought. According to Andersen (1986, p. 94), the Anglo-American system of education is geared toward the development of conscious, analytic, propositional modes of thought. When interpersonal communication is taught within the context of purposive consciousness, students will learn more than the tricks of relational theories. They (and their instructors) will begin to perceive interpersonal relations as contexts of consciously based analysis,

strategic planning, and intentional action. Thus, a student may deutero-learn conscious processing of formerly unconscious process. Instruction carries the potential for destructive rather than constructive behavior in relationships and encourages the overly analytic, self-aware behavior described in the introductory scenario by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984).

As instructors of interpersonal communication we appear to be caught in a paradox. The form of university instruction is largely conscious. Even attempts to discuss unconscious process must be codified and phrased in the language of consciousness, thus reinforcing the learning II habit of perceiving relationships as consciously apprehended entities. How are we to resolve such a paradox? This issue is addressed in the next section.

Minimizing the Problems of Conscious Instruction

Can instruction in interpersonal communication be resurrected from the problems of conscious purpose? I believe the answer to this question is a qualified yes. The solution lies in a synthetic course that blends conceptual and behavioral knowledge with conscious and unconscious information processing. The structure of this course is detailed below.

A popular way to discuss what a student should achieve in the basic courses in communication is through the term competence. Because little consensus has been achieved in conceptual and operational definitions of competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, p. 11), I prefer to promote Bateson's (1972d) concept of "grace" as the instructional foundation of the introductory interpersonal communication course. For Bateson, grace meant integration. Graceful communication can be encouraged through the integration of conscious and unconscious processing, and humanistic celebration (skills & attitudes)

and objective scientific (theoretical) knowledge. These dimensions and their implications for interpersonal behavior and instruction are depicted in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 Here

Figure 1 represents the juxtaposition of conscious and unconscious processes with behavioral skill and theoretical knowledge. Enacting a relationship or teaching a course from the point of view of a single category in the matrix would not facilitate graceful communication.

Category one (unconscious knowledge of context specific behaviors) represents the type of interaction common to unreflective communicators in daily interaction. Operating within this realm, a communicator is unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of their communication skills and attitudes and unreflectively enacts communication behaviors in various relational contexts. This is the condition that most interpersonal communication courses have been designed to correct.

Category two (conscious knowledge of context specific behaviors) represents conscious matching of behaviors to contextual contingencies. Operating within this realm, a communicator consciously selects communication behaviors based on their analysis of the situation and their repertoire of communication skills and attitudes. The humanistic celebration (Pearce, 1977) instructs from within this domain, encouraging conscious choice-making based on immediate goals and "proper" attitudes toward, self, other, and the relationship (p. 111). Because of its focus on conscious choice making, this instructional approach suffers from the problems of consciousness discussed above.

Category three (unconscious knowledge of global theory) represents an unconscious understanding of theory. Operating within this realm, a communicator acts based on an intuitive understanding of relational processes derived from previous experience. The intuitions would be difficult for the communicator to phrase since this requires the translation of information from less conscious to more conscious linguistic forms. People communicating from this category are often said to have a "knack" for getting along with others. Instruction from this perspective cannot be achieved without first making the student conscious of what they do unconsciously. This creates translation errors and encourages deutero-learned conscious codification of relationships.

Finally, category four (conscious knowledge of global theory) represents conscious understanding of interpersonal communication theory. Operating within this realm, the communicator attempts to employ generalizable theoretical knowledge to predict and control various communication situations. Objective scientific (Pearce, 1977) instruction works from within this domain, encouraging students to consciously apply theories and law-like generalizations to control interpersonal situations. This instructional approach suffers from problems of consciousness discussed above.

Because no single categorical approach can provide graceful communication, a synthesis is necessary. The basis for such a synthesis involves Bateson's (1972d) concept of "habit." As mentioned in the review of neurological research, one function of unconscious process is to handle information that is so familiar that conscious inspection is unnecessary. Habit formation is the process of sinking knowledge down to less conscious levels (Bateson, 1972d). In terms of the neurological model discussed earlier, a habit results when specialized processors adapt to consistent, repeated information broadcast by the global information exchange

(consciousness) (Baars, 1983; Davidson, 1982; Gregg, 1984). If the conscious information is sufficiently repetitive, the specialized processors will adapt to the information and continue to operate as specified, making conscious information no longer necessary for efficient performance. Thus, habituation is a less conscious functioning that represents a response to redundant conscious information.

The development of habit is encouraged through the repetition (practice) of particular attitudes, skills, or theoretical constructs--including those related to interpersonal communication (Bargh, 1989; Berger & Douglas, 1982; Fazio et al., 1986; Spielman et al., 1988). As a habit develops, two things occur simultaneously. The person is "more able to do whatever it is he is attempting; and, on the other hand, by the phenomenon of habit formation, it makes him less aware of how he does it" (Bateson, 1972d, p. 138) Thus, the more skillful a person becomes, the more habitual and unconscious his/her performance, and the less accessible this learning is for conscious reflection (Baars, 1985; Langer & Imber, 1979). Thus, habituation is adaptive in that it frees the limited speed and capacity of consciousness for more important activity (Langer & Imber, 1979). However, such sinking makes the habitualized information unavailable for rapid alteration and adjustment. According to Bateson (1972d), "we can afford to sink those sorts of knowledge which continue to be true regardless of changes in the environment, but we must maintain in an accessible place all those controls of behavior which must be modified for every instance" (p. 142).

What problems does the notion of habit formation solve for interpersonal communication pedagogy? The creation of habit directs us toward the specific type of synthesis needed for graceful communication. Graceful interaction

emerges through didactic practices that emphasize categories two and three of the Matrix of Codification and Learning (Figure 1).

Teaching from category three, a general "perspective" of communication should be taught that is broadly applicable to a variety of relational contexts. By perspective I mean a series of theories that share similar philosophical properties, (Fisher, 1978). When teaching the perspective the instructor should raise various theoretical approaches to students' consciousness and then, through practice, drilling, testing, and constant repetition, cover the basic precepts until they become habituated--they sink back to less conscious levels. This information can become habitual because, as Bateson (1972d) argues, an adequately broad communication perspective includes theories that continue to be true regardless of contextual changes.

Teaching from category two, an instructor should teach students to consciously analyze situations so they can creatively match specific skills and attitudes to particular situations. Examples include alternative styles of conflict management (competition, collaboration, avoidance, accommodation, or compromise) that can be invoked depending upon concern for self or other in the relationship (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985, p. 40). This type of instruction encourages students to consciously create their own behavioral options based on analysis of the situation. Such analysis and decision-making must remain conscious because, as Bateson (1972d) reminds us, information that must be modified for each instance must be available to consciousness. When new environmental demands are present, new behavioral options must be created and communicators need to be more aware of their behavior (Berger,& Douglas, 1982; Davidson, 1982; Hample, 1986).

When basic course instruction is conducted from category three (unconscious knowledge of global theory) and category two (conscious knowledge

of context specific behaviors), the student's unconscious understanding of broader theoretical issues guides and informs their conscious behavioral choices. Ideally, the combination of unconscious theory and conscious skills and attitudes results in communication interaction that is more integrated than strictly conscious approaches.

Pedagogical Implications

Several content guidelines can be suggested when utilizing the integrated instructional approach described above. These suggestions are suitable for an introductory course in interpersonal communication with an audiences of speech communication majors or for mixed audiences of majors from various disciplines. Graceful communication is facilitated through pedagogical techniques that synthesize unconscious, habitual use of a communication perspective and its related theories (category three, Figure 1) and conscious analysis of communication situations (category two, Figure 1). This section describes how to teach a coherent communication perspective, how to make thinking in terms of that perspective habitual, how to encourage conscious analysis of context specific events, and a discussion of the tools that make this instruction possible.

The previous discussion of mental habits indicates that interpersonal instructors should select a perspective as a lens through with to examine various aspects (nonverbal communication, verbal communication, relationship definitions, relationship stages, conflict, etc.) of the interpersonal communication course. What perspective should the instructor of the basic course adopt? The choices are many and the decision up to the instructor. A symbolic interactionist perspective (Fisher, 1978; Littlejohn, 1983) can be taught, emphasizing dramatistic theories, theories of self-presentation, symbolic convergence theories, or various rules theories such as Coordinated

Management of Meaning. A pragmatic perspective could be taught (Fisher, 1978) emphasizing general systems theory, behavioral rules, or cybernetic theory. The perspective should include theories that are related and provide a coherent lens through which to examine interpersonal relationships. Survey courses covering a variety of perspectives and theories are important for advanced students but do little to help the introductory student apply their newfound knowledge to specific relational contexts. Without the development of analytic habits, the introductory student in a survey course is likely to forget more than they learned and apply aspects of each theory they remember in conscious, partial, and haphazard ways.(2)

Once a theoretical perspective is chosen, it should be taught (made conscious) through inductive instruction. Inductive instruction involves teaching theory via example. In this approach, the initial weeks of classroom activity involve discussion of relational examples (derived from videotaped TV shows, play scripts, novels, etc. . .) that allow students to discover for themselves the major theoretical precepts of the classroom perspective. Discussion should be guided by instructor questions that focus student attention toward whatever pattern the theoretical precepts explain. The questions should be directive of attention without lecturing students about the theory, thus stealing from them the possibility of discovery. As students begin to see patterns in each example, they should be encouraged to verbalize the precepts discovered in some generalized form such as theoretical statements of prediction, metaphors, relationship rules, decision-trees, or other generalized form. Learning the classroom perspective through discovery facilitates several goals: First, if theoretic knowledge is to be made habitual (as suggested in category three of Figure 1), it must first be made conscious and then, through repetition, can become more habitual. This

process of raising consciousness and then habituating knowledge through repetition is supported by the neurological and social-cognitive research reviewed earlier. Second, learning by discovery encourages students to deutero-learn discovery. According to Bateson,

> "students exposed to 'learning by discovery' over considerable periods begin to learn to discover: faced with a new type of problem, they proceed on the assumption that the phenomena are are orderly and underlying principles can be discovered, and so they undertake research, constructing and solving analogous problems and comparing results (in M. C. Bateson, 1972, p. 114).

Thus, should some interpersonal context defy understanding via the selected perspective, students will, ideally, continue to assume the relationship has pattern and seek to discover that pattern. Teaching the perspective through induction can be augmented and clarified through lecture as long as the process of discovery is not short-circuited.

Throughout the period in which students begin to articulate the theoretical precepts of the classroom perspective, habituation of that perspective also takes place. Research indicates that repetition and practice encourage habituation. In class, habitual thinking in terms of the classroom perspective can be encouraged through weekly quizzes, tests, student presentations, etc. . . The goal is to cover the basic theoretical precepts until they become second nature--they sink back down to less conscious levels.

As students' thinking about their relationships in terms of a selected perspective is verbalized and rehearsed, (it becomes habit to think in that fashion) they must be encouraged to consciously analyze relationships and create behaviors to fit particular contexts (category two, Figure 1). This goal, however, needs to be qualified in two ways. First, students should not be encouraged to monitor and become self-conscious of every relational enactment. As suggested earlier, conscious codification is an uneconomical and inefficient mode of understanding much of what takes place in

interpersonal relationships. There are times, however, when conscious codification is beneficial to relationship enactment. This is true of situations in which new modes of behavior are called for such as problematic periods in the development of relationships, or the initiation of new relationships. It is during these times that conscious behavior choices can be most beneficial to the relational participant. A second qualification is needed because of the dynamic nature of human relationships. It is obvious that differences in codes, relationships, and contexts mitigates against prescribing specific behaviors for universal application. Rather than prescribing the conscious selection of skills from an immutable repertoire provided by instruction, the basic interpersonal communication class should foster analytic thinking on the part of the student. If students are capable of analyzing a situation (informed, of course, by their developing habit of theoretical thinking), their behavioral creations will be selected based on the dynamics of the situation, as well as their unconscious understanding of theory.

The analytic skills I am advocating are developed deductively through classroom application of theory to examples of communication situations. Using the theoretical precepts articulated early in the semester, students are encouraged to analyze and evaluate examples of interpersonal communication in a variety of contexts (e.g. marriages, friendship, conflict, etc.). Two goals are accomplished by the application of theory to emergent situations: First, students become skilled in the conscious analysis of emergent communication and can better choose their next move in relational encounters. Second, by using the theoretical precepts as the basis for analysis, students gain further practice in theoretical thinking, thus, sinking the theory to less conscious levels. In fact, later attempts to consciously analyze the

relationship will, ideally, refer less specifically to theoretical precepts because habituation makes this information less available to consciousness. Late in the course, analytic insights will become "apparent" or "obvious" to the students. Conscious reference to the theory will be necessary only in situations where the perspective does not easily apply.(3)

It is apparent from the above discussion that examples of interpersonal relationships are vital educational tools for both the inductive and deductive portions of the interpersonal course. Where do such examples come from? I will briefly discuss five sources of examples suitable for the introductory interpersonal course.

One of the most available materials for use in the interpersonal course is videotape (Rossiter & Luecke, 1974). Useful texts can be created by cutting extraneous material (through the use of two VCRs), so that coherent relational structures and conversations can be created and used for analysis in the interpersonal course.

A second text available for student analysis are their own relationships. Following Rawlins (1985), I give my students an assignment asking them to write a focused five to seven page paper describing a relationship they were involved in or are familiar with. The key to the success of this assignment is a clear set of theoretical precepts to apply to the relationship. Without such precepts, students are likely to focus on emotional, psychological issues and reveal intimacies about themselves and their relationships. Such revelations put the instructor in the position of relational voyeur and create an unethical "theraputic" relationship out of the student-teacher relationship.

A third source of textual material is the observation of naturally occurring behavior. Students are encouraged to observe naturally occurring

behavior in public settings and analyze this behavior according to some theoretical precepts. Students should, however, be warned to confine their observations to publicly occurring behavior, making this method best for studying nonverbal rather than verbal behavior. Observing the verbal behavior of strangers places the student in the role of "spy" and raises serious ethical dilemmas for students and instructor.

A fourth source of interpersonal texts is ethnography. Ethnographic texts of interpersonal relationships are easily available and provide rich, textured inscriptions of relational practices. Analyzable texts can be found for almost any interpersonal communication perspective. Examples include: Elliot Liebow's (1967) book entitled, ***Tally's Corner***, Jules Henry's (1971) study of family life, ***Pathways to Madness***, and Gerald Philipsen's (1975) study of working class relationships, "Speaking 'Like a Man' in Teamsterville."

Finally, a fifth source of interpersonal texts is literature. Plays and novels can create interesting and rich worlds of communication for students to analyze. Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson's (1967) classic analysis of Edward Albee's play, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" is an example of the kind of theoretic analysis that can be done with literary works. Other potentially useful literary works include the plays of Ibsen ("A Doll's House), Arthur Miller ("Death of a Salesman"),and Tennessee Williams ("Glass Menagerie"); stories by O. Henry, or books by Wallace Stegner are also potential options.

The analysis of texts, whether from television, experience, observation, ethnography, or literature should be done inductively to encourage discovery of theoretical precepts, and deductively to encourage analysis of relationships informed by an increasingly unconscious use of the theoretical precepts to understand those relationships.

Conclusions

Two areas of future research suggest themselves based on this instructional perspective. First, the case for the integrative instructional approach suggested here is supported logically by Bateson's communication and learning theory, as well as neurological and social-cognitive research. However, empirical research is needed that may add to or modify the pedagogical suggestions made here. Second, the integrative approach suggested here can be applied to a variety of other instructional settings including: public speaking instruction, English composition instruction, theraputic contexts, and organizational training and consulting. Applications of this approach to these areas might solve a variety of pedagogical problems.

Finally, it is important to note that the synthetic approach described here does not and cannot completely solve the problem of deutero-learned consciousness. No matter how habitual our understanding of interpersonal communication becomes the course is still consciously created, purposively planned and these are habits that can and will be adopted by students. This problem is one of reflexivity. We use conscious codes to refer to both conscious and unconscious codification. Reliance on conscious processes of codification for communication reinforces consciousness. Until and unless we can teach courses using more integrated codes (such as art, dance, and music) deutero-learned conscious will always be present to a degree.(4) However, I believe that the synthetic approach does reduce this problem. I also believe that the synthetic approach suggested here helps support the value of "humility" (Bateson, 1972d, p. 437) when interacting in larger cybernetically organized systems and cultivates the habit of looking at relations not as means and ends but asks us to look for "direction and value" (p. 160) in our acts and in ourselves.

Endnotes

1 Several forms of preconscious automatic activity are now being studied by social and cognitive psychologists. See Bargh (1989) for a review of this research.

2 By suggesting that basic course instruction be done from a single theoretical perspective I am not suggesting that we propagandize students. It is necessary to inform students that other perspectives are available. In my interpersonal course, students are asked to compare and contrast the classroom perspective with a perspective not taught in class. This assignment accomplishes three goals: First, students acquire information about the content of another perspective. Second, by comparing and contrasting the new perspective with the classroom perspective the student reads, reviews, studies, and in the process, habituates the classroom perspective. Third, the student deutero-learns that there are many available means of interpreting the social world, the class perspective being only one means.

3 As the class perspective becomes habitual, students will be less able or inclined to refer to the specific theoretical precepts discussed in class. This suggests that strategies of testing must adapt to this eventuality. While early tests can emphasize specific theoretical generalizations of the perspective, later tests should avoid such specificity to focus on analysis of relational contexts.

4 This paper is itself a largely conscious attempt to integrate conscious and unconscious processes--which is a difficult act of reflexivity and paradox.

Figure 1

Matrix of Codification and Learning

	Skills & Attitudes	Theory
Unconscious	*Unconscious Knowledge of Context Specific Behaviors* 1	*Unconscious Knowledge of Global Theory* 3
Conscious	*Conscious Knowledge of Context Specific Behaviors* 2	*Conscious Knowledge of Global Theory* 4

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